



# **Fishery Bulletin**

**For Immediate release:**  
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## **Wild Dolphin Conservation Program Expands in Hawaii**

Tour Operator on Maui Earns Dolphin SMART Recognition

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NOAA and its partners have continued expansion of the Dolphin SMART conservation program in Hawaii to the island of Maui. Dolphin SMART is a program that awards annual recognition to tour operators who responsibly view wild dolphins and educate their patrons on dolphin conservation.

Maui tour business, Trilogy Excursions, earns the Dolphin SMART recognition in Hawaii. This is the fifth Dolphin SMART business in the state, marking the expansion to the third island. Trilogy Excursions joins Hawaii Nautical and their subsidiary Port Waikiki Cruises, Ocean Joy Cruises, and Dolphin Star on Oahu, and Holoholo Charters on Kauai, as Hawaii's newest, and Maui's first, Dolphin SMART operator. Dolphin SMART originated in Key West, FL, in 2007 and expanded to Alabama before launching in Hawaii in 2011.

"We are so pleased to have Trilogy Excursions as a part of Dolphin SMART," said Laura McCue, NOAA Fisheries Dolphin SMART regional coordinator. "Dolphin SMART businesses are committed to conserving the health of local dolphin populations, and visitors who book with a Dolphin SMART business can feel confident that they are participating in responsible tourism. Trilogy Excursions are true stewards for the environment by becoming a Dolphin SMART participant on top their other activities, which include their bi-monthly *Blue 'Aina* trips, helping to conserve Hawaii's reefs. They are a great addition to the Program!"

NOAA encourages visitors to Hawaii to book with a Dolphin SMART operator. Vessels of participating operators carry a Dolphin SMART flag and decal with current calendar year. A list of Dolphin SMART operators is available online at [www.dolphinSMART.org](http://www.dolphinSMART.org).

Viewing dolphins from a responsible distance is a cornerstone of the Dolphin SMART program. Close viewing of wild dolphins may disrupt important natural behaviors such as resting, feeding, and nursing and result in negative impacts to the health of dolphin groups and their young.

The Dolphin SMART program was launched in 2007 by NOAA's Fisheries Service and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), and Dolphin Ecology Project. The "SMART" acronym is a reminder of the basic principles of dolphin viewing etiquette:

- **Stay** at least 50 yards from dolphins,
- **Move** away slowly if the dolphins show signs of disturbance,
- **Always** put your vessel engine in neutral when dolphins are near,
- **Refrain** from feeding, touching, or swimming with wild dolphins,
- **Teach** others to be Dolphin SMART.

Local businesses and organizations are also showing their solidarity for wild dolphin conservation by becoming *Proud Supporters* of Dolphin SMART. Current organizations that are Proud Supporters of Dolphin SMART in Hawaii include hotels, foundations, organizations, and businesses found throughout

the islands. Dolphin SMART *Proud Supporters* help raise public awareness about the program and educate the public on why it is important to responsibly view wild dolphins.

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On the web:

Dolphin SMART: [www.dolphinmart.org](http://www.dolphinmart.org)

NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office: [www.fpir.noaa.gov](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov) and [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Whale and Dolphin Conservation: [us.whales.org](http://us.whales.org)

Dolphin Ecology Project: <http://www.dolphinecology.org/mission/index.html>